

1/5/2005

Military Child Education Coalition

FACT SHEET

Serving military children while America's military serves the nation

The Military Child Education Coalition

The Military Child Education Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization that identifies the challenges that face the highly mobile military child, increases awareness of these challenges in military and educational communities and initiates and implements programs to meet the challenges. MCEC's goal is to level the educational playing field for military children wherever they are located around the world and to serve as a model for all highly mobile children.

Why the Military Child Education Coalition's Efforts are Essential

In America's ongoing war on terror, overdue attention is finally being paid to the sacrifices of military personnel. Overlooked sometimes, however, are the sacrifices made by military families and especially military children, who "also serve." Military children generally move from six to nine times during their K-12 school years. Many make multiple moves during high school years alone, some even during their senior year. Academic standards, courses, access to programs, promotion and graduation requirements, and programs for children with special needs and transfer and acceptance of records vary greatly from state to state and even from school to school. These frustrations are in addition to giving up friends and associates with whom a rapport has been established. Separation from a deployed parent (or parents) raises an additional issue. MCEC's role is to help families, schools and communities be better prepared to support children during these frequent moves and difficult – and sometimes traumatic – times in the life of military families.

The Military Child Education Coalition History and Experience

The Military Child Education Coalition was chartered as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation in 1998 and has already achieved a great deal of success. With more than 1100 members worldwide, the Military Child Education Coalition serves the 800,000 military-connected children through a network of school systems and military installations. We have also been entrusted with several major projects, including the Secondary Education Transition Study for the United States Army, the largest study of its kind. The Military Child Education Coalition has also quickly developed a reputation for innovative and user-friendly products. One example of our work is MCEC's *Chart Your Course* research-based package, which helps military-connected families plan for secondary school and beyond. This package has already been distributed to over 90,000 individuals worldwide.

The Military Child Education Coalition Support

The Military Child Education Coalition has been very fortunate to receive support from many individuals and organizations to achieve these objectives. Our board consists of individuals who have been involved in education and in the military. Our board's Executive Committee are: Chairman of the Board - General (Retired) Tom Schwartz, LT General (Retired) H.G. "Pete" Taylor, Dr. James Mitchell, Dr. William Harrison, Cathy Franks. Some of the other members of our 20-person board are Sandy Schwartz, Toni Hill, Marianne Ivany, Kris Ford, LTG (Retired) Don Jones, and Joan Barrett. Dr. Mary M. Keller is the Executive Director.

Notable individuals who volunteer their time and efforts serving on our National Advisory Committee are former Chiefs of Staff of the Army General (Retired) Dennis Reimer and Mary Jo, as well as General (Retired) Eric Shinseki and Patty. Admiral Walter Doran and Ginny as well as the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Richard Myers and his wife Mary Jo who are also members of this advisory group.

In April the MCEC's efforts on behalf of military children received a resounding endorsement. The Military Child Education Coalition was honored to be recognized by First Lady, Laura Bush as the 2004 Congressional Club's Charity of the Year.

The MCEC's efforts have benefited greatly from the caring support of corporate friends. Dell Computer Corporation, with the help of MG (Retired) Frank Miller, donated the first thirty computer systems for the Interactive Counseling Center. USAA Foundation, with the help of MG (Retired) Joe Robles, donated financial support. We have also received a recent grant from the state of Texas to further these efforts in Texas. General Dynamics, Sprint and other corporations have donated consistently to the Military Child Education Coalition's efforts.

The MCEC's has chosen Atlanta as a splendid location for bringing our community together. The Military Child Education Coalition's 7th Annual Conference, **Making Connections for Children**, will be June 29 – July 1, 2005, at the Westin Peachtree, Atlanta, Georgia. MCEC's Annual Conference offers an opportunity for educators and military a chance to share their ideas, efforts, and expertise on behalf of military children.

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The Military Child Education Coalition Initiatives

Founded only seven years ago, MCEC has made great strides in thoroughly researching the needs of military children and using the expertise, knowledge and experience gained to initiate programs to meet the needs of these children. Some of the programs MCEC provides are:

- **The Transition Counselors Institute (TCI)** © 2002 & patent pending. TCI was developed by MCEC to train school counselors, along with other educators, in the transitional challenges faced by our very mobile student population. The TCI, based on solid research, prepares professionals to recognize and address school transition concerns that impact mobile military students. MCEC has trained almost 2000 educators from over 100 school districts including DoDEA to date.
- **The Special Education Leaders Institute (SELI)** © 2003 & patent pending. SELI trains military and school professionals in the amplified challenges for children with special needs. The purpose of the SELI is to support the military-connected, special needs student through understanding, accommodation, networking, technologies, and communication.
- **The Guard and Reserve Training Institute** © 2004 & patent pending. This training addresses how educators, military, and other concerned professionals can support the children of National Guard and Reserve personnel that have been mobilized or deployed. Mobilization and deployment of National Guard and Reserve personnel is at an exceptionally high level, which leaves youth in impacted families learning to cope with the long-term absence of a parent and having to assume more responsibilities. Because these youths are dispersed in both urban and rural communities, they may often be isolated from others experiencing the same situations. This initiative addresses support for the "suddenly military" child.
- **The Student-2-Student (S2S) Program** The MCEC designed and developed this student-centered project with the purpose of S2S is to establish the framework for a school managed, student led, school transition program. In 2004, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Army Child and Youth Services, the MCEC researched and developed this 9-12 program. Initially the S2S project with piloted at six selected high schools from six states. The S2S project has been so successful that in 2005 43 more high schools will participate in the S2S project and, with MCEC's support, implement their campus-based program. The S2S is enhanced through the global connection of project sites using the Interactive Counseling Center.
- **The Interactive Counseling Center (ICC)** © 2002 & patent pending. MCEC has developed an Interactive Counseling Center, a web-based video conferencing system that allows families and educational counselors to exchange confidential school records and information between sending and receiving schools. MCEC has installed ICCs and trained educators in over 74 schools. The ICC network has now connected schools that are serving the military communities in the US and overseas. We also have an ICC with the First Cavalry Division in Baghdad.
- **Assessment Resource Center** © 2001. MCEC has developed and maintains a special component of our web site as a resource on state testing requirements. This web-based information helps parents and students negotiate their way through various accountability systems and educate them about resources available for families through the states.
- **Publications.** One example of MCEC's publications is *Chart Your Course* © 2001. This is for students and parents to use as a guidance tool and checklist for students grades 6-12. There are over 100,000 copies distributed. Our deployment brochure, *How To Prepare Our Children and Stay Involved in Their Education During Deployment*, for parents and educators has been distributed to over 80,000 world-wide. The MCEC's companion publication supporting the "suddenly military child" of parents serving in the National Guard and Reserve components has also been widely distributed and well-received. Our newest publication, *Preparing for the Journey*, is geared to help parents of children birth through second grade to a successful start in their educational careers.



The Military Child Education Coalition Is Proud of What We've Done For Kids...

As of December 2004 we have -

- Trained over 2400 Counselors and Educators in our Transition Counselor Institutes
- Installed 84 Interactive Counseling Centers to include stateside and overseas DoDEA schools, in addition to installing an ICC in Baghdad with the First Cavalry Division.
- Trained over 204 parents and professionals in 18 Parent Work Shops
- Achieved 100% membership of all Services to include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard
- Hosted the MCEC's 2004 National Conference with 481 participants
- Awarded 17 Bernard Brown Space Camp Scholarships to military-connected students since the scholarship's inception in 2001
- Conducted research into the amplified and unique school transition issues and challenges of children with special needs for the U.S. Army
- Completed *Preparing for the Journey*, a major publication based on more than two years of research for ages birth through Grade 2
- Completed a major study on the transition of military-connected students for the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM Study)
- Supported 167 Memorandum of Agreement signatories
- Provided services and resources to 1,040 Texas school districts with a focus on the 39 districts that serve military installations for the Governor of Texas and the Commissioner of Education
- Contracted with the U.S. Army Community & Family Support Center to include the following services: training for Supporting the Children and Families of Guard and Reserves in 25 states with 8 receiving direct services in the initial year; implementation of Student 2 Student (S2S) programs and Interactive Counseling Centers in 22 school districts in 9 states, provide training and resources for 200 Child and Youth Services sites in early literacy
- Developed the Student 2 Student (S2S) program in 6 pilot sites for the U.S. Army
- Conducted 3 trainings for professionals from 8 different states to help support the children and families of the National Guard and Reserves
- Received the Congressional Club's recognition as their 2004 Charity of the Year